

De Witt, John, b. at Catskill, August, 1789; U.C. and C.N.J. 1809, studied under Dr. Porter, of Catskill, lic. by Berkshire Assoc., 1811 (Lanesboro, Mass., 11-13); Albany, 13-15, Albany, 2d, 15-23, Prof. Ecc. Hist. in New Brunswick Sem., 23-31, also of Oriental Literature, 25-31, Prof. of Belles-lettres, Criticism and Logic in Rutgers Col., 25-31; d. Oct. 11, 1831. Elected a trustee of Q.C. 1823. D.D. by U.C. 1821.

He had traits different from most men. Indeed, he was a *sui generis* man. His temperament was warm and impulsive, with a vivacity and sprightliness that sometimes ran into excessive levity. His faculties were very vigorous, and he had a versatility that was indulged to a fault. While he was a pastor he sought to know everything. He was distinguished by a marked individuality if not originality of mind. He did and said things in his own way, and as no one else was likely to do or say them; yet he always, or, at least, generally, did and said them well. He excelled almost any man in solving knotty problems in theology, and in elucidating difficult and complicated texts and subjects. His induction into the professorial chair was of great and evident advantage to him, inasmuch as it served to concentrate his mind, and restrain its tendencies to an excessive excursive-ness, while it gave him an opportunity to bring his multifarious acquirements to bear upon his special department of labor. He was somewhat abrupt in speech and manner, yet a man of much kindness and hospitality.—Rev. Gabriel Ludlow.

He commenced the study of law in Kinderhook; but, his mind having been brought under deep religious convictions, he felt called to devote himself to the ministry. In Albany he was the colleague of Dr. Bradford. The church of Albany had two buildings in different parts of the city, and in 1815, when the collegiate connection was dissolved, the two pastors drew lots to decide to which churches they should respectively go.

He was a man of frank, joyous, and genial nature, yet of acute and tender sensibilities. His piety was ardent. His preaching eminently plain, evangelical, and earnest. His manner in the pulpit was unaffected, dignified, and serious, his voice clear and strong, and his enunciation distinct and deliberate. No man could listen to him without pleasure and instruction. As a pastor he enjoyed in a high degree the confidence and affection of his people, and his separation from them was an event deeply regretted by them all.—See "Evang. Quarterly," ii, 114, and sketch in "Sprague's Annals." "Centennial of N. B. Sem.," 433. "Johnson's Sketches of Ch. of Albany," 1899, p. 31.

PUBLICATIONS: Disc. on death of Dr. J. H. Livingston, 1825. A Ser. on "Infant Baptism." "The Bible of Divine Origin": A premium tract. A Ser. on the "Necessity of the Atonement," 1830, in "Murray St. Lectures," and "The Scripture Doct. of Regeneration," 1832. UCSMA 1809dewitt\_j-0001



Dr. De Witt was very prominent in the plans which ultimated in the fourth professorship in the New Brunswick Seminary in 1865. The committee, in reporting to Synod in 1866, say: "Your committee feel that they cannot close this report without a special acknowledgment of the great service rendered the church by Prof. John De Witt, D.D., who initiated the present movement, obtained the principal part of the large amount that has recently been subscribed for the various purposes of the institution, and of whom it is especially to be noted, that by untiring zeal and energy, although with the hearty co-operation of his colleagues, he carried the effort to carry the fourth professorship to a successful termination."—"Mints. Gen. Syn.," 1866, p. 94.

He was also equally active in subsequent efforts for increasing the en-

Many letters to Holland. A few letters of his from Surinam were secured by the author in 1897-8, and will be issued in "Amsterdam Correspondence," now in course of publication by the State of New York.

De Rooy, Jacobus, b. 1812, S.S. Paterson, 1st Holl., 56-8. Died 1884.

De Spelder, John A., b. in Michigan, 1851; H.C. 70, H. Sem. 73, 1. Cl. Michigan; Macon and South Macon, 73-83, Prin. of N. W. Classical Academy, Orange City, Ia., 1883— S.S. Orange City (American), 1885-7, pastor, 1887-94.

De Voe, David, studied theol. under Livingston (?) Beaverdam and Middleburgh, 1808-16, also Oppenheim, 11-16, St. Johnsville, 16-30, Columbia and Warren, 36-9; d. 1843. Was an active pioneer in Central New York, and organized many churches. See reports of Miss. Soc. R. D. C., 1822-32.

DE VRIES HENRI, b. at The Hague, Neths., Dec. 13, 1847; High School, Amsterdam, 71; N.B.S. 76, 1. N. Cl. L. I.; Jericho, L. I., 76-77, Alexandria Bay, 77-82, Assist. Past. Middle Collegiate Ch., N. Y. C., 82-84, Peekskill, 1884—

PUBLICATIONS: Trans. from the Dutch of "The Work of the Holy Spirit," by Dr. N. Kuyper, of Amsterdam, 1900. Contributions to the "Ch. Int." and other religious papers.

DE VRIES, J. HENDRIK, b. Amsterdam, Neths., May 8, 1859; R.C. 81, N.B.S. 88, 1. Cl. Westchester; ord. by Presb. of Westchester, 88 (Miss. Pastor of Immanuel Chapel, Yonkers, 88-93); Bronxville, 93-7 (Princeton, 2d Presbyt., 1897—)



De Witt, John

1809

1. A Sermon on Infant Baptism, preached at Albany no
2. A Discourse on the Death of the Rev. J. H. Livingston, D.D. 1825 no
3. A Sermon on the Necessity of the Atonement, preached in the Murray Street Church, New York, and published as one of the Murray Street Lectures 1830. no
4. A Premium Tract entitled "The Bible of Divine Origin" no
5. A Sermon on Regeneration, (posthumous) no 1832

DeWitt, John  
From: Catskill, N.Y.  
Last residence: N.Brunswick, N.J.

092

Records show one  
John DeWitt  
Pvt. in Capt. Benjamin Wood's Co.  
(3rd Regt. U.S.Vols.) from New York

Commencement of service: Jan 18, 1813  
Discharged by Surgeon Mch 21, 1813  
(disability not found).



I know not how far you include in your biographical sketches, or expect from your correspondents, any reference to the dying hours of the clergymen whose names you are commemorating. But there was something so peculiarly impressive in the last days of Dr. McMurray that I cannot refrain from a brief allusion to them. I never saw a death-bed scene of more varied joys, more enlarged views of Divine truth, more complete superiority to every earthly tie and feeling. His spirit often seemed to have passed away so far towards Heaven as to have lost all view of earth, and to be waiting with its eyes fixed upward for the signal that would call it home. In the early part of his illness he had seasons of darkness and disquietude. A few weeks before his death he observed to me,—“I have had my conflicts, but my Saviour would not let me die, would not let me die [repeating it] till he had given me victory over all through Him who hath loved me.” And a complete victory it was. He felt, to the last, a deep and abiding sense of unworthiness and short-coming, but, with it all, such a steadfast hold of the Divine promises, such an elevating sense of pardoning grace, that, at times, I have seen his bosom heaving with the fulness of its own joys. When portions of the Bible were repeated to him, he would often exclaim,—“What light! What love! How it shines!” His favourite petition, as he approached the last hour, was the prayer of Stephen,—“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” and his last breath was seen to leave him as he repeated the Saviour’s name for the last time. I can never forget the scenes of that chamber, and, often as he expressed his thanks for my visits, I always felt that I received more enjoyment than I was the means of imparting. He died as he had lived, honouring his Master, and an ornament to the Ministry.

Believe me yours very truly,

J. M. MATHEWS

### JOHN DEWITT, D.D.\*

1811—1831.

JOHN DEWITT was a son of John and Mary (Braisted) Dewitt, and was born in Catskill, N. Y., in August, 1789. He was a lineal descendant of Tjerick Dewitt, who emigrated from Holland, and settled at Kingston, Ulster County, N. Y., in the year 1656. His father was a farmer, as indeed were nearly all his paternal ancestors in this country. At a very early age he discovered a passionate fondness for reading; and his father, who did not fail to notice and appreciate the precocious intellectual developments of his son, resolved to give him the best advantages for an education that were within his reach. He fitted for College mainly under the instruction of the Rev. Dr. Porter, of Catskill. He entered Union College in 1805, and, after remaining there three years, transferred his relation to the College of New Jersey, where he graduated in 1809. His father, who was ambitious chiefly of his acquiring worldly distinction, placed him in the law office of Peter Van Schaak, a gentleman distinguished for his legal attainments, at Kinderhook; but he had not been there long before, to his father’s great disappointment, he became the subject of strong religious impressions, which resulted in a determination to abandon the profession of Law and devote himself to the Ministry. “Oh, John, John,” said his father, expressing his disappoint-

\*MSS. from his son, Rev. John Dewitt, and Rev. Chauncy Eddy.



ment in the Dutch language, which was then extensively used in that neighbourhood,—“I thought I was going to make a great man of you.” “Ah, father,” was the son’s reply, in the same language,—“the good only are great.” The old gentleman could not, for some time, become reconciled to the idea of his son’s being a Minister; and, on this account, he laboured under some disadvantages in obtaining his Theological education. He returned to his native place, and sought the direction and assistance of his old friend, Dr. Porter, under whom he prosecuted his Theological course. The Doctor was greatly pleased with his pupil, and was heard many years after to speak of the full and able analysis of Edwards on the Will, and some other profound Theological treatises, which he produced at that early period.

He was licensed to preach, by the Berkshire (Congregational) Association, on the 15th of October, 1811. He was ordained and installed as Pastor of the Congregational Church at Lanesborough, Mass., on the 8th of July, 1812, as colleague with the Rev. Daniel Collins.\* The Ordination Sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Porter, of Catskill. Here he continued till near the close of 1813, when he received calls, about the same time, from the Reformed Dutch Churches in Schoenectady and Albany; the latter of which he thought it his duty to accept. There were at that time two Dutch Churches in Albany, forming one pastoral charge, under the care of two ministers. By his settlement Mr. Dewitt became the colleague of Dr. John M. Bradford, with whom he alternated in ministerial service until the year 1815. In that year he received a call to the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church in New York; and, though greatly attached to his field of labour in Albany, yet, as certain obstacles to his usefulness existed there, for the removal of which he had little reason to hope, he reluctantly determined to accept the call. He seems, however, to have underrated the attachment of his flock; for no sooner were his difficulties understood than the provision for their removal was promptly agreed upon. A separation between the two congregations was effected, and each minister had his distinct pastoral charge. Dr. Bradford and Mr. Dewitt drew lots for the churches, and the South Church fell to the latter; the people being left to follow either Pastor according to their preference. Mr. Dewitt still found himself in the midst of a large congregation, and he continued to prosecute his labours for several years with great alacrity and acceptance.

In September, 1823, the Chair of Biblical Criticism, Church History and Pastoral Theology, in the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, being vacant, Mr. Dewitt was elected to fill it; and, as there were then only two Professorships in the institution,—the other, that of Didactic Theology, being held by the venerable Dr. John H. Livingston,—the duties to which Mr. Dewitt was called required the most indefatigable industry. Dr. Livingston died at the beginning of the year 1825; and the additional labours of instructing the classes in Didactic Theology devolved upon the surviving Professor until another was chosen, which was not till the ensuing September. Dr. Dewitt (for the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by Washington College, Pennsylvania, in 1824) was relieved from a portion of his duties in

\* DANIEL COLLINS was born at Guilford, Conn.; was graduated at Yale College in 1790; studied theology under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Bellamy, at Bethlehem, Conn.; was ordained, and installed Pastor of the Congregational Church in Lanesborough, Mass., April 17, 1794; and died August 26, 1822, aged eighty-three years.

1825, by the establishment of a third Professorship, embracing the branches of Church History and Pastoral Theology,—only, however, to have the amount of labour restored by the revival of Rutgers College, in which he took the deepest interest. A plan was formed which provided that, for a while, certain duties, in the College should be performed by the Professors in the Seminary. Dr. Dewitt promptly assumed the duty of instruction in Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres, and discharged it, as he did his other duties, with great ability and enthusiasm.

Dr. Dewitt remained in his Professorship till the close of his life. His constitution was naturally vigorous, though he suffered, for many years, from a bronchial affection, which somewhat embarrassed him in public speaking, and formed one inducement for his acceptance of the Professorship. His heart, however, was so much in the ministry that he could not but respond favourably to many of the applications that were made to him to preach in New Brunswick and other places in the region; so that he really preached as much as was consistent with the discharge of his duties as a Professor. His last illness was brief, though, several months before, his constitution had been materially impaired by exposure and exhaustion from a journey undertaken in the service of the Church. This is supposed to have been the remote cause of an attack of fever that terminated his life. He died on the 11th of October, 1881, in the forty-second year of his age. His Funeral Sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Cannon, who was one of his colleagues. The General Synod, at an extra session, held soon after his death, ordered the erection of a suitable monument, with an appropriate inscription, which was shortly after carried into effect.

Dr. Dewitt was married, about the year 1810, to Sarah Schoonmaker, of Sugerties, Ulster County, N. Y. By this marriage he had seven children, two of whom entered the legal profession, and one the ministry,—the latter is now (1864) Professor in the same Seminary with which his father was so honourably connected. Mrs. Dewitt died in 1824; and, in September, 1825, he was married to Anna Maria Bridgen, of Albany, who survived him about eleven years, and died at Albany in 1842. By the second marriage he had two children, both daughters, one of whom is married to the Rev. A. G. Vernilye, D. D., now of Utica, N. Y., and the other to the Rev. James Cruickshanks, of Spencer, Mass.

Dr. Dewitt’s publications are —

A Sermon on Infant Baptism, preached at Albany,	-	-	-	-	-	1825
A Discourse on the Death of the Rev. J. H. Livingston, D.D.,	-	-	-	-	-	1825
A Sermon on the Necessity of the Atonement, preached in the Murray Street Church, New York, and published as one of the Murray Street Lectures,	-	-	-	-	-	1830
A Premium Tract entitled “The Bible of Divine Origin,”	-	-	-	-	-	1832
A Sermon on Regeneration, (posthumous,)	-	-	-	-	-	1832

FROM THE REV. HENRY MANDEVILLE, D.D.

ALBANY, May 3, 1852.

My dear Sir: My acquaintance with Dr. Dewitt began in September, 1826, when I entered the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, in which he was then Professor of Biblical Literature. I had been favoured, by a friend, the



late Professor J. A. Yates, of Union College, with a letter of introduction to him, and, soon after my arrival, I sallied forth to deliver it.

As I drew near his residence, a gentleman, approaching from the opposite direction, arrested my attention. He was a little below the average height, stoutly made, broad shouldered and broad faced. His hat hung on the back of his head, with the rim resting apparently on the collar of his coat behind; and underneath, beginning to separate on an exposed forehead of ample dimensions, floated sportively, outward and backward in the wind, long curling locks of brown hair. He came on with a rapid step and a swinging gait, and it was wonderful to see how he twirled and flourished a cane in his right hand, as if he were practising much to his own amusement, but to the manifest alarm of passers-by, a lesson in sword exercise. But, while his feet seemed to be thus hurrying forward on a business of life and death, and his hands to be entertaining themselves as they liked best by the way, his eyes, indifferent to what was passing below, had a distinct occupation of their own. They roamed every where, examining every thing, overlooking nothing. They were now bent upon the pavement, as if busy with the geological character of the stones which composed it; they now looked sideways at the street, as if it were of the utmost importance to know its width in feet and inches; they now turned upward, and slowly ascended the walls of the buildings on either side of the street, as if their materials and structure were worthy of profound consideration; and now, having reached the very topmost brick of the chimney opposite, they struck out boldly into the measureless ether, and seemed to be lost in astronomical and meteorological speculation.

These observations, made in less time than I have been engaged in relating them, were yet in progress, when, before we could meet, he suddenly turned aside, and, mounting a short flight of steps, entered a dwelling a few feet in advance of me, casting at me, as he went in, an enquiring glance from a large clear blue or blue-grey eye. Arrived opposite the door, to my surprise, it bore the very number to which I had been directed as the residence of Dr. Dewitt. I rang the bell. The gentleman I had just seen entering appeared. "Well," said he, "well," as if impatient to know my business. "Is Dr. Dewitt at home?" I asked, somewhat disconcerted by his abrupt, impatient manner. "I am the man," was his reply. "Will you allow me to see you a few moments?" "Walk in"—and in I went.

Leading me into a parlor and requesting me to be seated, he himself remained standing, with those inquisitive eyes of his fixed upon me, as if intent on wrenching from me the purpose of my visit, and, before I had time to open my lips, I was greeted with a repetition of the address which had already startled me. "Well," said he, "well." My self-possession now utterly forsook me; and, with a trembling hand, delivering my letter of introduction, I stammered out in a broken sentence my desire to enter the Seminary, and pursue a course of Theological study under his instruction. Recalled to himself by my visible embarrassment, or regarding me in a very different light when he learned that I was not an intruder upon his time, but a prospective pupil, he instantly, as when the sun bursts through cloud and mist on the raw atmosphere of a dismal day and bathes the whole landscape in warmth, splendour and beauty, assumed the most conciliatory, tender, anxiously affectionate and winning address, which it is possible to conceive; and I forgave him, and shortly after took my leave, very happy.

In this short scenic sketch all who knew Dr. Dewitt will recognize, if I mistake not, some of the peculiarities of his personal appearance, and at least one of his address;—a neglect of those slight courtesies, (the result rather of pre-occupation and inability to conceal it, than of intentional rudeness,) which ingratiate at first sight, and produce an impression of considerate affability

and friendship. Had any one inferred from this abrupt manner that the Doctor was deficient in kindness of heart, the inference would have done him great injustice; for no man, in my opinion,—an opinion formed after intercourse with him extending through three years,—possessed a greater share than he of sensibility and real goodness. It was necessary, however, to interest him before these were disclosed—the apparent rock had to be struck before the waters within would flow copiously forth.

I had arrived at New Brunswick three or four weeks after the commencement of the term. Hebrew being there, as in other Seminaries, the first study of a Theological course, I came immediately under the Doctor's instruction. Few elementary aids in English to the study of Hebrew then existed in this country, and of those that did exist, none were used as yet in the Seminary. The instructions of the Doctor were given by Lectures; and, as so large a portion of the term had already passed before my arrival, I found my endeavours to keep pace with the class in hearing, copying, committing to memory, reciting, and, above all, understanding the current Lectures, seriously embarrassed by my ignorance of those which had been previously delivered. I borrowed the notes of my fellow pupils, but want of time and the difficulty of understanding mere rules, without pertinent examples to illustrate them, rendered them almost useless. The consequence, as might be expected, was, that I scarcely ever appeared in the lecture room decently prepared for a recitation. After repeated failures, which annoyed me exceedingly, and the more because they made me the Hebrew butt of the class, the Doctor one day called me up, and put to me a series of questions, the answers to which were so far beyond the reach of my optics that, though I rolled them about in an agony of search, I could find none of them, and in despair I dropped into my seat. He looked at me in surprise, then reddened with displeasure, and was evidently on the point of giving it severe utterance; but he suddenly changed his mind, and proceeded with the recitation as if nothing had occurred. At its close, he requested me to remain after the other students had left.

"Mr. Mandeville, why did you treat me so disrespectfully just now?" "Disrespectfully, Doctor? I never thought of such a thing." "Why then did you take your seat in that unceremonious, and, as it seemed to me, sullen manner, without answering my questions?" "Ah, my dear Doctor, how you have misapprehended me! I meant no disrespect; I sat down because I was chagrined and ashamed of myself that I could not answer; and, to confess the truth, because, after so many failures, I was in despair of ever getting an insight into the Hebrew." "That was the case, was it?" and his brow cleared at once—"I am glad to hear it—I thought otherwise. But what will you do? I can't go over the ground again for your benefit; you must get abreast of your class somehow. Come, try—a strong will can achieve wonders. Try, try; if I can aid you, be assured I will with pleasure."

I went home ruminating. I had just heard of Stuart's translation of Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. My resolution was taken. That very evening I went by the boat to the city of New York, and returned in the morning with the precious volume in my possession. It was then Thursday. We had a recitation in Archaeology that day, and on the next it happened that the Doctor was called from town and we had none in Hebrew. On Saturday we never had one. During all this time the Grammar of Stuart was my constant study,—all day and nearly all night; and, on Monday morning, I was master not merely of all the ground over which my class had passed, but of much of which they knew nothing. My short Hebrew lesson, too, had been conned with a diligence which left nothing unexplained. Every word, with its inflections, every vowel sign, with its changes and transpositions, every thing relating to sense and government, I had made myself thoroughly familiar with.



Behold me then seated in the lecture room. I look at the Doctor very demurely; and I observe that he is looking at me very kindly. Condensation and patronage were written in every line of his face. It said as plainly as face could say—"Poor fellow, don't be alarmed; we'll deal gently with you; and, with a little patience and hard work, we'll make a Hebrew of you yet." It is soon my turn to read. I read and translate with a fluency which the Doctor manifestly did not expect. He gives me a word to parse. The analysis of it is easy; and, for this reason, doubtless, it was selected; for the Doctor is aware of my deficiencies in grammar, and he will favour me. The promptitude and confidence, however, with which I proceed, encourages him to select another. This, too, is quickly disposed of, and another, and another. He shows astonishment—the class share it. He is resolved to ascertain how much I do know, and he selects the most difficult case in the sentence. I analyze it as promptly as before. His astonishment is still greater—but there is one part of my analysis pointedly at variance with my previous instructions. He corrects me. I deferentially beg his pardon, but, at the same time, adduce an example which confirms my position. He reddens even more than he had done the week before, but he frankly acknowledges that I am right; and, soon after, dismissing the class, he once more requests me to remain.

"Mr. Mandeville, what is the meaning of this?" "Of what, Doctor?" "Of this rapid progress in Hebrew, and its grammar?" "Why, I have been studying as you recommended, Doctor." "Studying what?" "My lesson and Stuart's Gesenius." "Humph!" said the Doctor, "you may go now."

I need scarcely say an order was immediately sent to the city of New York for as many copies of Stuart as there were members of the class. But what particularly amused us all the next time we visited the room of the Doctor, we observed a Stuart's Hebrew Grammar lying at his elbow; and he soon informed us that recitations from it would be henceforth substituted for his Lectures. Happily for us that they were; for we soon ascertained that much previously taught by him sadly needed review and correction. His knowledge of the sacred language was obviously very limited. In fact, as is too often the case with Professors in our Literary and Theological institutions, he had been selected with reference rather to his general acquirements, and the position he held in the Church, than to his acquaintance with Hebrew and its literature; and I have reason to believe that he began his preparation for the Professorship only when he became its incumbent.

And yet, strange as may appear, after making such a statement, I regard Dr. Dewitt as one of the ablest Professors with whom I ever came in contact. If his professional knowledge was not great, it was nevertheless sufficient to correct and guide us; while, endowed with an extraordinary memory, stored with information upon almost all subjects, with a vigorous understanding, with a brilliant imagination, with a delicate perception of beauty, and with a suggestive faculty which I have never seen equalled, much less surpassed, he possessed the enviable power of investing with interest every subject which he touched, and kindling the enthusiasm of his pupils. Few were the recitations from which we did not retire with our minds in a glow of admiration at some original conception of the text, some pertinent and striking illustration, direct or analogical, or at least some casual remark, imparting to the fact, or truth, or sentiment under consideration, and even to dry grammatical forms, a new and exciting aspect.

I have spoken of the Doctor's extraordinary memory and stores of general information. The following incident which broke the monotony of our student life, and is yet, I believe, traditional in the Seminary, will be regarded as evidence of both. But, before I proceed to the relation, I should observe that

the Doctor, like all men of an original turn of mind, cherished an undisguised contempt for the mere retailer of the opinions of other men; especially when the latter exposed himself to the charge of plagiarism. I really believe that, had he possessed power to dispose of a culprit of this class, he would have sentenced him to perpetual imprisonment for the first offence.

It was the second year of my connection with the Seminary that a young gentleman from Scotland, who had studied Theology one year in his native land, entered the Junior class; with the expectation, however, of obtaining a dispensation from the General Synod, for which he soon after applied, to finish his course of study in two years. The dispensation was subsequently granted on the condition that he sustained a satisfactory examination, and preached a sermon, which, in the opinion of the Faculty, gave evidence of due ability and acquirements. Whether the examination took place or not, I do not remember; but the sermon was prepared and preached. When the students had, as usual, criticised the performance, most of them praising it in exalted terms, Dr. Dewitt rose, and said he would take the liberty of entertaining us a moment with a few historical reminiscences; and he then went on to relate that there were, in the beginning of the last century, in Scotland, two celebrated men, who were brothers; the one a Mathematician, and the other a Minister of the Gospel. He told us where they were born, and when and where they were educated. When he had traced their career in common, he spoke of each separately; of the Mathematician first; informing us how he rose to the highest distinction, and won the friendship of Sir Isaac Newton, by whose recommendation he was elected Professor in the University of Edinburgh, &c., &c.; then of the Preacher, following him step by step until he reached the highest eminence, and became the acknowledged ornament of his Church and Country. He wrote and published, the Doctor continued with increasing animation and emphasis, a volume of sermons. Among these there was one of remarkable beauty and power. The Doctor warmed, and his eye gleamed with mingled admiration and mischief, as he spoke of the various excellencies of the sermon,—its arrangement, its argumentation, its superb imagery; and proceeding thus until, having wound us up to the highest pitch of interest and excitement, he paused; and looking around deliberately on the circle of students, and at last fixing his gaze on one now deadly pale, he closed by saying, amid a breathless silence,—"And that sermon, Gentlemen, we have heard to-day."

"A man is known," saith a Spanish proverb, "by the company he keeps." I believe that company is a less unerring index of character than certain marked predilections for things. Dr. Dewitt was extravagantly fond of the old poets and prose writers of the English language; from Chaucer down to Milton and Jeremy Taylor,—and of flowers. One of the former was scarcely ever, when he was in his study, beyond the reach of his hand; and one of the latter, whether he was at home or abroad, in his study, in the street, or in his lecture room, was scarcely ever, during the summer season, absent from his hand, or a button-hole of his coat. Pinks, especially, which he reared from cuttings, were his passion; and I have many a time observed him busy as a bee, and humming like a bee, over an array of inverted tumbblers, that might have furnished the dinner table of a very respectable city hotel. When he had succeeded in maturing a fine double carnation, he was in raptures—almost in an ecstasy, a fury of sentiment and emotion.

Of the piety of Dr. Dewitt, and his ability as a Preacher, all who knew him will speak in terms of strong commendation. Of a joyous, happy temperament, his religion, as a serious display, was less demonstrative than that of many others; but no one could doubt, certainly no one intimately acquainted with him, the sincerity and fervour of his love for Christ and his



cause. In conversation with him on the subject of our common salvation, and especially of Christian experience, I have often observed his voice faltering and the tear trembling in his eye.

As a Preacher, he was excelled by few. There was, indeed, nothing remarkable in his address. Hearing him, you would observe that his attitude was dignified, his manner unaffected and serious, his voice strong and agreeable, and his enunciation deliberate and distinct; but you might regret, perhaps, that he was so closely confined to his notes; since it impaired the effect of his manly frame and noble brow; keeping him, as it did, too much of the time, in a stooping posture, and confining one hand to his manuscript. His address, however, was soon forgotten in the superior attractions of the subject and its handling. No man could more felicitously introduce his proposition and divide the discussion, or more vigorously, yet simply, conduct the argument; and few approached him in the aptness and originality of his illustrations and the purity and precision of his style. I always heard him with instruction and pleasure; and what is an unerring test of a superior mind in the pulpit, I never heard him without being able to bear away with me, and reconsider at home, the larger portion of his discourse.

Such, very imperfectly delineated, was Dr. Dewitt as a Man, a Professor, a Christian, a Preacher—at least such were the impressions which, in these several relations, he made on my mind, memory and heart.

Respectfully your obedient servant,  
HENRY MANDEVILLE.

## JOHN SCOTT MABON.\*

1812—1849.

JOHN SCOTT MABON, a son of George and Margaret (Tillie) Mabon, was born in the parish of Bowden, Roxburgh County, Scotland, on the 20th of January, 1783. His father was a weaver, and in moderate worldly circumstances, but both his parents were eminently pious, and paid great attention to the religious instruction of their children. As he was rather a feeble boy, he was employed, for two or three summers, in watching his father's cows in the field; and, as this gave him abundant leisure for reading, he read many religious books by which the early serious tendencies of his mind were greatly strengthened. His father, in the hope that he might become a Minister of the Gospel, sent him to school at Selkirk, distant four miles; and he bought a pony for his accommodation, so that he might spend his nights at home. About this time he had great anxiety in regard to his spiritual interests, and, for a considerable period, was alternately struggling against sin, and then yielding to it, so that his experience had no very definite or satisfactory character. At length, however,

\*MS. Autobiog.—MS. from his son, Rev. Dr. Mabon.



## JOHN DE WITT

DIED--In Albany, N. Y., Rev. John De Witt, D. D., formerly pastor of the South Dutch Church in that city, and at the time of his death, Professor of Belles Lettres, Criticism and Logic in Rutgers College, and the Theological Seminary at Brunswick, N. J. The period of his ministry was more than ten years, and although at its commencement there was towards him a strong feeling of admiration and regard, yet, like the shadow in the departing sun, it was growing and enlarging to the last, until at the termination of his pastoral functions, sentiments of exalted respect, of affectionate esteem, and with many, sincere love and veneration, were general throughout his congregation. This growing popularity was amply sustained by the success of his ministry. Since Dr. De Witt succeeded to the Professorate chair he has discharged the duties of his place without any diminution of his high reputation for talents, scholarship, and a sound and well regulated mind.

FROM The New England Magazine vol. I (1831) p. 453

1809

A sketch of the life of JOHN DeWITT appears in the Annals of the American Pulpit, Vol. 9

## JOHN DeWITT.

Dr. DeWitt was born at Catskill, N. Y., in August, 1789. After studying at Union College three years he removed to Princeton and graduated there in 1809. For a time he studied law in the office of Peter Van Schaick at Kinderhook, N. Y. While there he was converted and determined to study for the ministry. For this purpose he studied with Dr. David Porter, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Catskill. He was licensed to preach by the Berkshire Congregational Association in 1811 and in 1812 was ordained as Associate Pastor of the Congregational Church at Lanesborough, Mass. In the following year he became Collegiate Pastor in Albany, and when the two Dutch

churches in Albany were separated in 1815 Dr. DeWitt continued as Pastor of the Second Church until 1823. In that year he was elected Professor of Biblical Literature and Ecclesiastical History in the New Brunswick Seminary. In 1825 he was relieved from the Ecclesiastical History by the election of Dr. Selah S. Woodhull. During the academic year 1811-12 Dr. DeWitt had served Queen's College as a Tutor. He now became Professor of Belles-Lettres, Elements of Criticism and Logic in Rutgers in addition to his Seminary duties. He was also Trustee of the college from 1823 until 1831. Dr. DeWitt received the degree of D.D. from Union College in 1821. He died October 11, 1831.

*From New Brunswick  
Stud. Sem. Cat.  
p. 34.*



MONUMENT TO THE REV. DR. DeWITT.

The tasteful and appropriate cenotaph recently erected in the Protestant Reformed Dutch Church, Beaver street, is an eloquent and feeling tribute to the memory of the learned, eloquent and estimable divine, whose arduous labors and amiable traits of character are so touchingly described below. The inscription, we learn, is from the pen of the Surveyor General,--whose regard for the deceased, derived from habits of the closest intimacy, is only equalled by that of the congregation who received the benefits of his ministrations. The monument, which is highly wrought, and well conceived, is the work of Mr. J. Dickson, of this city. It is affixed to the wall on the left of the pulpit,---and consists of a base or plinth of white marble surmounted by an obelisk of a darker hue; against which is an urn, also of white marble, in alto relievo;---the base having on either side pilasters, supported by carved brackets, and finished, as ~~as~~ the whole, in the simple and effective style of the Grecian models. The following is the inscription:

In Memory of the  
Rev. John De Witt, D. D.  
First <sup>Sole</sup> pastor of this church,  
Where, for nearly eight years, he faithfully served  
as a minister of Jesus Christ;  
When he was elected a Professor in the Theological  
Seminary of the Reformed Protestant  
Dutch Church:  
The duties of which office he ably discharged,  
Until he was called by his Heavenly Father to  
cease from his labors,  
On the 11th day of October, 1831,  
In the 42nd year of his age.

Eminent as a theological and preacher,  
Indefatigable in his labors of love,  
And amiable in all his social relations;  
This congregation, as a token of their high  
estimate of his worth and services,  
And their affectionate regard for his memory,  
have erected this monument,  
1832.

(From Albany Argus)

Albany Daily Advertiser  
May 21, 1832.



✓  
1811 REV. JOHN DE WITT, A.B. (Union and Coll. N. J.,  
1809), D.D. (Union, 1821).....\*1831  
Tutor, 1811-12.  
Professor of Belles-Lettres, Elements of Criticism and  
Logic, 1825-31.  
Trustee, Rutgers, 1823-31.

*Rutgers  
cat. p.  
36.*

John DeWitt--Union 1809      Referred to in  
Johnson's Book

From W. N. P. Dailey

JOHN DEWITT, non-graduate 1809, resident of Catskill, N.<sup>Y</sup>., was a member of the  
Philomathean Society. H died in 1831.

Philomathean Catalogue 1830.



CLASS OF 1809

JOHN DE WITT

b. at Catskill, August, 1789; U.C. and C.N.J. 1809, studied under Dr. Porter, of Catskill, lic. by Berkshire Assoc., 1811 (Lanesboro, Mass., 11-13); Albany, 13-15, Albany, 2d, 15-23, Prof. Ecc. Hist. in New Brunswick Sem., 23-31, also of Oriental Literature, 25-31, Prof. of Belles-Lettres. Criticism and Logic in Rutgers Col., 25-31; d. Oct. 11, 1831. Elected a trustee of Q.C. 1823. D.D. by U.C. 1821.

He had traits different from most men. Indeed, he was a 'sui-generis' man. His temperament was warm and impulsive, with a vivacity and sprightliness that sometimes ran into excessive levity. His faculties were very vigorous, and he had a versatility that was indulged to a fault. While he was a pastor he sought to know everything. He was distinguished by a marked individuality if not originality of mind. He did and said things in his own way, and as no one else was likely to do or say them; yet he always, or, at least, generally, did and said them well. He excelled almost any man in solving knotty problems in theology, and in elucidating difficult and complicated texts and subjects. His induction into the professorial chair was of great and evident advantage to him, inasmuch as it served to concentrate his mind, and restrain its tendencies to an excessive excursiveness, while it gave him an opportunity to bring his multifarious acquirements to bear upon his special department of labor. He was somewhat abrupt in speech and manner, yet a man of much kindness and hospitality.--Rev. Gabriel Ludlow.

He commenced the study of law in Kinderhook; but, his mind having been brought under deep religious convictions, he felt called to devote himself to the ministry. In Albany he was the colleague of Dr. Bradford. The church of Albany had two buildings in different parts of the city, and in 1815, when the collegiate connection was dissolved, the two pastors drew lots to decide to which churches they should respectively go.

He was a man of frank, joyous, and genial nature, yet of acute and tender sensibilities. His piety was ardent. His preaching eminently plain, evangelical, and earnest. His manner in the pulpit was unaffected, dignified, and serious, his voice clear and strong, and his enunciation distinct and deliberate. No man could listen to him without pleasure and instruction. As a pastor he enjoyed in a high degree the confidence and affection of his people, and his separation from them was an event deeply regretted by them all.--See "Evang. Quarterly," ii, 114, and sketch in "Sprague's Annals." "Centennial of N. B. Sem.," 433. "Johnson's Sketches of Ch. of Albany," 1899, p. 31.

PUBLICATIONS: Disc. on death of Dr. J. H. Livingston, 1825. A ser. on "Infant Baptism." "The Bible of Divine Origin": A premium tract. A Ser. on the "Necessity of the Atonement," 1830, in "Murray St. Lectures." and "The Scripture Doct. of Regeneration," 1832.



John De Witt 1809



John De Witt

1809